

APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT GRANT

POT COVER WITH DECORATIVE INDICIA

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates in general to the field of covers for tubular objects.

5 Specifically, a preferred embodiment of the present invention relates to using indicia to decorate a stretchable cover for a flowerpot. In more detail, one embodiment of the present invention relates to providing an ornamental cover sleeve for a pot, including a clay flowerpot, which includes providing graphics, text or other decorative ornamentation that can be added to the cover sleeve to enhance its aesthetic appeal or commemorate a specific event
10 or occasion, such as, for advertisement, promotion, or for holidays or special personal days.

2. Discussion of the Related Art

The below-referenced U.S. patents disclose embodiments that were at least in part satisfactory for the purposes for which they were intended. The disclosures of all the below-referenced prior United States patents in their entireties are hereby expressly incorporated by
15 reference into the present application for purposes including, but not limited to, indicating the background of the present invention and illustrating the state of the art.

U.S. Patent No. 6,108,974 discloses a preferably elastic cover sleeve for a pot, such as a flowerpot, having a top lying in a first horizontal plane, a bottom lying in a second horizontal plane, a sidewall extending between top and bottom, an upper corner at the
20 interface of top and sidewall, and a lower corner at the interface of bottom and sidewall. The sleeve extends along sidewall and around the lower corners. The sleeve has a flat horizontal annular upper portion lying in a horizontal plane, and a flat horizontal annular lower portion lying in the horizontal plane. The upper portion of the sleeve extends horizontally inwardly along horizontal plane to an inner lip so that it is coplanar with upper corner along horizontal
25 plane. The lower portion of the sleeve extends horizontally inwardly along a horizontal plane to the inner lip making it coplanar with a lower corner along a horizontal plane. The upper and lower portions of the sleeve are parallel. The inner lip defines an upper central opening. Another inner lip defines a lower central opening coaxially aligned with and of smaller diameter than the upper central opening. The upper portion of the sleeve terminates

in a horizontal plane, and the lower portion of the sleeve terminates in another horizontal plane

U.S. Design Patent No. 428,360 discloses an ornamental design for a cover sleeve.

The invention arose out of continuing development efforts relating to the subject
5 matter of commonly owned U.S. Patent No. 6,108,974.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A primary object of the invention is to provide an apparatus, such as a sleeve, that may be used to decorate a tubular object, such as a pot. It is another object to provide a means of adhering promotional or other messages to cylindrical objects. It is another object
10 to allow for interchangeable decoration of pots. It is another object of the invention to allow for messages that follow the holidays or one's special personal days. It is another object of the invention to present a novel craft item wherein the sleeve, fastener and decorations may be sold as part of a hobby kit. Another object of the invention is to provide an apparatus that is ruggedized and reliable and can be used for pots in varying sizes. Another object of the
15 invention is to provide an apparatus that has one or more of the characteristics discussed above but which is relatively simple to manufacture and assemble using a minimum of equipment.

By way of summary, the present invention accomplishes the above by providing a decorative cover for a cylindrical object and method of manufacturing the same. In one
20 embodiment, the invention relates to ornamental cover sleeves for pots including flowerpots. The invention arose from continuing development efforts directed toward providing cover sleeves for flower pots which are not only aesthetically pleasing but also provide the functional advantages mentioned above, e.g., ease of manufacture, and accommodate varying pot sizes including variances in standard sizes. Moreover, the invention provides for
25 decorative indicia and other ornamentation that can be applied to the sleeve and removed for various decorative looks or special events.

These, and other, aspects and objects of the present invention will be better appreciated and understood when considered in conjunction with the following description

and the accompanying drawings. It should be understood, however, that the following description, while indicating preferred embodiments of the present invention, is given by way of illustration and not of limitation. Many changes and modifications may be made within the scope of the present invention without departing from the spirit thereof, and the invention
5 includes all such modifications.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A clear conception of the advantages and features constituting the present invention, and of the construction and operation of typical mechanisms provided with the present invention, will become more readily apparent by referring to the exemplary, and therefore
10 non-limiting, embodiments illustrated in the drawings accompanying and forming a part of this specification, wherein like reference numerals designate the same elements in the several views, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a sectional front elevation view of a cover sleeve on a pot in accordance with the invention;

15 FIG. 2 is an isometric view of a cover sleeve and indicia in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 is an isometric view illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a front elevation view of the sleeve showing an alternative embodiment of
20 the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a view like a portion of FIG. 2 and shows a further embodiment;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view showing a further embodiment;

FIG. 8 is a view like FIG. 7 and shows a further embodiment;

FIG. 9 is a view like FIG. 2 and shows a further embodiment;

25 FIG. 10 is a side elevation view showing a further embodiment;

FIG. 11 is like FIG. 10 and shows a further embodiment;

FIGS. 12, 12a, 12b, and 12c are like FIG. 10 and show further embodiments;

FIGS. 13–20 schematically illustrate method steps in accordance with the invention;

FIGS. 21–24 schematically illustrate further method steps in accordance with the
5 invention;

FIG. 25 illustrates a further method;

FIG. 26 is a side view partially in section showing a further embodiment;

FIG. 27 is a side sectional view showing a further embodiment;

FIG. 28 is a side view showing a further embodiment; and

10 FIG. 29 is a side view showing another embodiment.

In describing the preferred embodiment of the invention which is illustrated in the drawings, specific terminology will be resorted to for the sake of clarity. However, it is not intended that the invention be limited to the specific terms so selected and it is to be understood that each specific term includes all technical equivalents which operate in a
15 similar manner to accomplish a similar purpose. For example, the word connected or terms similar thereto are often used. They are not limited to direct connection but include connection through other elements where such connection is recognized as being equivalent by those skilled in the art.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

20 With regard now to the drawing figures in which like reference numerals designate like parts throughout the disclosure, FIGS. 1, 2 and 3 show a cover sleeve 2 for a pot 4, such as a flowerpot, having a top 6 lying in a first horizontal plane 8, a bottom 10 lying in a second horizontal plane 12, a sidewall 14 extending between top 6 and bottom 10, an upper corner 16 at the interface of top 6 and sidewall 14, and a lower corner 18 at the interface of
25 bottom 10 and sidewall 14. Sleeve 2 extends along sidewall 14 and around upper and lower

corners 16 and 18. Sleeve 2 has a flat horizontal annular upper portion 20 lying in horizontal plane 8, and a flat horizontal annular lower portion 22 lying in horizontal plane 12. Upper portion 20 of the sleeve extends horizontally inwardly along horizontal plane 8 to inner lip 24 coplanar with upper corner 16 along horizontal plane 18. Lower portion 22 of the sleeve
5 extends horizontally inwardly along horizontal plane 12 to inner lip 26 coplanar with lower corner 18 along horizontal plane 12. Upper and lower portions 20 and 22 of the sleeve are parallel. Preferably, inner lip 24 defines an upper central opening 28. In the preferred embodiment, inner lip 26 defines a lower central opening 30 coaxially aligned with and of smaller diameter than upper central opening 28. Upper portion 20 of the sleeve terminates in
10 horizontal plane 8, and lower portion 22 of the sleeve terminates in horizontal plane 12.

In the preferred embodiment, sleeve 2 is composed of an air permeable elastic material and is designed to preferably fit over a clay pot. The air permeability provides breathability, for healthier soil and plant life in the pot. Clay flowerpots are also air permeable and hence breathable. The noted elasticity is preferred to provide a conformed fit
15 of the sleeve around the pot, and to facilitate stretchability enabling insertion of the pot into the sleeve, or stated another way, sliding of the sleeve around the pot.

In one preferred embodiment, the pot also has a hoop direction 32, see, e.g., FIG. 2, along the circumference thereof, and an axial direction 34 along the height thereof between top 6 and bottom 10. The sleeve comprises material stretchable along at least one of such
20 directions, i.e., along the X direction, which will become hoop direction 32 and/or along the Y direction which will become axial direction 34. Depending upon applications to be described, material stretchable along only one of such directions may be sufficient and may be desirable for cost savings. It is preferred, however, that the sleeve comprise material stretchable along both of such directions, to accommodate both height and diameter
25 variances in pots. This is desirable for so-called "standard sized" pots. For example, American manufactured pots typically identify the same according to the pot diameter across top 6 from outer corner to outer corner, whereas Italian manufactured pots identify size by a diameter measurement across top 6 from an inside corner to an outside corner. Even manufacturers within countries may differ on how they measure pot dimensions. Thus, a

standard 4-inch pot may in fact measure 4 1/2 inches or some other dimension depending on the type of measurement system used.

In preferred form, sleeve 2 is formed of polyurethane coated plastic or polyester material, preferably Lycra, e.g., a tight weave nylon Lycra fiber providing stretchability
5 along both the hoop and the axial directions. In a further embodiment, the sleeve is a multi-layer composite having a first layer comprising material stretchable along both of the noted hoop and axial directions, and a second layer mated with the first layer. In one embodiment, such a second layer is polyurethane and provides a leather-look, or alternatively a grained look, or alternatively a shiny or matte vinyl look. A drawback of such second layer coating
10 is that it is not often as elastic as the noted first layer and hence reduces stretchability thereof. In such embodiment, a first layer stretchable in both of the noted directions is desirable to compensate for some of the reduced stretchability of the second layer.

Referring now to FIGS. 2–5, ornamentation or indicia 36 can be applied to the sleeve 2, either directly, e.g., as in FIGS. 3, 5, or through the application of a removable film 38
15 carrying indicia to the sleeve 2, e.g., as in FIGS. 2, 4. Such ornamental features can serve a variety of purposes or functions. One purpose is to allow for the decoration of the pot itself in the form of a graphic 36a. Another purpose would be to add a text message 36b to the sleeve 2. The message could be a holiday greeting, e.g., Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Thanksgiving, or another special day such as a birthday, wedding, anniversary, Mother’s
20 Day, Father’s Day, Boss’s Day, Secretary’s Day, etc. A brand name, company name, corporate logo, advertising slogan, or other graphic could also be added to the sleeve 2. The invention further considers a message to an individual being applied, e.g., “I LOVE YOU, RENEE” or “SARAH IS SPECIAL.” A message or graphic conveying a particular special event such as a rock concert or family reunion could also be added. The invention
25 encompasses any form of indicia that an owner might want attached to the sleeve.

A wide variety of decorative implements could also be added to the sleeve. Some examples might include, holograms, stickers, pictures, photographs, beads, dangling decoration, buttons or any other decorative appliqué. The appliqués can include various shapes and sizes of fixed films, two dimensional and three dimensional objects. FIGS. 4 and

5 demonstrate an example of one such graphic image which might be applied either directly to the sleeve or to a piece of removable film 38. The invention further contemplates craft kits which could be sold that include beads, stickers or other decorative tools to enable an individual to decorate the sleeve 2 in any manner an individual wanted.

5 As best seen in FIGS. 3 and 5, indicia 36 can be directly applied to the sleeve 2 itself. Using a silk screening process, hot press printing or other means of applying designs to the fabric known in the art, the desired indicia could be directly applied the sleeve during the manufacturing process. Such sleeves 2 could be easily mass-produced, for example if needed for large events celebrated by large portions of the population.

10 As best seen in FIGS. 2 and 4, the decorations could also be applied and removed by the owner of the sleeves. Ornamentation or indicia 36 would preferably be manufactured separate from the sleeve 2. In one preferred embodiment, a removable film 38 is used which has decorations or other indicia on it. The film 38 could be attached to the sleeve using static adhesion, glue, a pin, button, snap, hook, fastener or any other means of attachment known in
15 the art. Such a removable film allows for design on the pot to be changed depending on the season or event which is considered.

 The invention could also be manufactured to be sold in a decorative craft kit. Such a kit might include a piece of elastic material used to form the sleeve 2, a fastener used to connect the ends of the sleeve material to one another, several pieces of removable film
20 bearing indicia (e.g., text or graphics) having some form of attachment mechanism on one surface for attachment of the film 38 to the sleeve 2 and decorations for attachment to the sleeve 2. One using the kit could make a decorative sleeve 2, by first selecting a piece of stretchable fabric. Next one could cut the fabric to the appropriate size for the tubular object. The fabric could then be attached first side to the fabric second side. The message would
25 then be attached to the fabric. Next decorations would be applied to the fabric. Finally the sleeve is applied to the tubular object.

 In the embodiment shown in FIG. 6, a tab 40 is attached to sleeve 2 for receiving a mounting arm 44 for suspending the pot and sleeve therefrom. The tab 40 is preferably stitched to sleeve 2 and provides a loop for receiving arm 44.

As seen in FIG. 7, pot 4 has an outer upper band portion 46 extending downwardly from upper corner 16 and then inwardly at a downwardly-facing shoulder 48. A suspension hoop 50 engages the underside of shoulder 48 to suspend pot 4 therefrom. A plurality of stringers 52, 54, 56 are attached to hoop 50 and extend upwardly for mounting to a hook 58.

5 Hoop 50 and portions of stringers 52, 54, 56, are trapped between pot 4 and sleeve 2. In FIG. 7, sleeve 2 is shown in an expanded stretched condition ready for receiving pot 4. Hoop 50 is held in place against the underside of shoulder 48 by sleeve 2, including when unmounted to hook 58.

In FIG. 8, a plurality of stringers 60, 62 extend along sidewall 14 of pot 4 and around

10 the bottom 10 of the pot, and have upper portions extending upwardly for mounting to a hook 64. Stringers 60, 62 are trapped between pot 4 and sleeve 2, and are held in place by conformance of the sleeve 2 to the pot 4.

In FIG. 9, a plurality of stringers 66, 68, 70 are attached to upper portion 20 of sleeve 2 and extend upwardly therefrom for mounting to a hook, such as 58. Upper portion 20 of

15 the sleeve 2 has a plurality of apertures 72, 74, 76 therethrough at which stringers 66, 68, 70 are respectively attached by respective rings 78, 80, 82.

As shown in FIG. 10, sleeve 2 has a pair of axial edges 92, 94 extending along axial direction 34, FIG. 1, and joined together along sidewall 14, of pot 4. In FIG. 10, axial edges 92 and 94 are stitched together as shown at stitch 96. In FIGS. 11 and 12, axial edges 92 and

20 94 are releasably attached to each other. In FIG. 11, axial edges 92 and 94 are attached to each other by a zipper 98. In FIG. 12, axial edges 92 and 94 are attached to each other by a hook and loop fastener 100, such as Velcro® brand fasteners. The axial edges 92 and 94 of the sleeve could be attached by a variety of different closures including snaps, zipper and snap combo, zipper and gusset combo, gussets, wrap and tie, ring closures, grommets and

25 laces, hook and eyes, buttons, fabric adhesives, buckles, clasps, envelope closures, halter top closure or any other means of fabric closure known in the art. The means of closure such as the zipper 98, could be exposed or not exposed and covered by another piece of fabric.

An alternative embodiment is shown in FIG. 12a. As shown in FIG. 12a the edges, 91, 93 of the sleeve could also be designed to run horizontally as opposed to axially. The

edges of the sleeve would thus run in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction 34, shown in FIG. 1. Also shown in is a pocket insert 95, which could be added to the decorative sleeve 2. The pocket 95, could be used to hold notes or a variety other objects. The pocket 95, could be used to hold warmers to keep the plant warm on a cold night.

5 Another alternative embodiment is shown in FIG. 12b. FIG 12b shows an alternative base pattern for the decorative sleeve 2. The sleeve includes a number of overlapping finger tabs 97, 99 which are used to secure the sleeve 2 around the pot. As noted above, any form of closure known in the art could be used to secure fingers of the sleeve together.

10 Yet another embodiment is shown in FIG 12c. Here the sleeve 2 includes a cloth gusset section 101 that is integrally attached to the elastic portion of the sleeve 2. The gusset section 101, is a flap of cloth that holds the shape of the sleeve 2 and enables it to be slid over pots without having to remove the material within the pot. The gusset section 101, holds the shape of the sleeve 2 until it is closed around the pot.

15 The pot sleeves 2 could also be arranged in a variety of decorative fashions. For example the pot sleeves could be layered. Decorative trim could be added to various sections of the pot sleeve. A clear finish or a mood fabric could be used with the pot sleeve. The sleeve could be arranged as a reversible sleeve such as a halter top. The sleeve could also be designed to cover just the rim of the sleeve similar to a headband. The seams of the sleeve could be sewn in a variety of fashions, including the use of different fabrics, and textures to
20 make the base pattern. Different coated and uncoated stretch fabrics could also be sewn together to make a base pattern.

25 As illustrated in FIGS.13–20, a method is provided for laying out a two-dimensional pattern for a cover sleeve for a pot such as 4. A fabric material 272, FIGS. 13 and 14, is selected which is stretchable along an X direction, left-right in FIG. 13, which will become the noted hoop direction, FIG. 1, and along a Y direction, up-down in FIG. 14, which will become the noted axial direction 34, FIG. 1. A given amount of stretch is determined along the X direction from a first X dimension X_1 to a second X dimension X_2 . A given amount of stretch along the Y direction is determined from a first Y dimension Y_1 to a second Y

dimension Y_2 . A ratio is determined, $\frac{X_1}{X_2} = K_x$. Another ratio is determined, $\frac{Y_1}{Y_2} = K_y$. A

product $K_x A$ is determined, where A is the diameter of top 16. Another product $K_x B$ is determined, where B is the diameter of bottom 10. Another product $K_y C$ is determined, where C is the vertical height between top 16 and bottom 10 along axial direction 34. The
5 profile of the sleeve is laid out on a two-dimensional plane, the profile having a top width $K_x A$, FIG. 16, a bottom width $K_x B$, and a height $K_y C$. The profile has tapered frustoconical right and left sidewalls 274 and 276. The profile of FIG. 16 is extended by extending each of the right and left sidewalls 274 and 276 upwardly along the frustoconical projection thereof to a width D_1 therebetween, FIGS. 17 and 18, where D_1 is greater than $K_x A$. The profile of
10 FIG. 16 is extended by extending each of right and left sidewalls 274 and 276 downwardly along the frustoconical projection thereof to a width D_2 therebetween, FIGS. 17 and 18, where D_2 is less than $K_x B$. In some embodiments, particularly where the measurement system for a standard size pot is in question, the pattern may be additionally extended by extending D_1 and D_2 left-right, for extra hoop stretchability to accommodate diameter
15 differences. Right and left sidewalls 274 and 276 are projected along respective right and left conical projection lines 278 and 280, FIG. 18, intersecting at a source point 282. A centerline 284 is extended from source point 282, bisecting D_1 . A first arc 286, FIG. 19, is struck, intersecting right and left endpoints 288 and 290 of D_1 from a focal point at source point 282. Arc 286 has a radius S_1 . A second arc 292 is struck, intersecting right and left
20 endpoints 294 and 296 of D_2 from a focal point at source point 282. Arc 292 has a radius S_2 .

A cone radius R is determined according to $R = \frac{D_1}{2}$. A pattern angle α is determined

according to $\alpha_p = \frac{R_p}{S_{p1}} \times 360^\circ$. The pattern is determined by arcs 286 and 292 subtended by

angle α , FIG. 20. H is the height of the pattern along centerline 284. The pattern in FIG. 20 is bounded by outer arc 286, right side 298, inner arc 292, and left side 300. The fabric
25 material is cut along the pattern shown in FIG. 20 as a template, and then formed into a frustoconical cone to provide sleeve 52. Indicia are then added to the fabric material as described above.

In another method as illustrated in FIGS. 21–25, the profile of the pot is laid out on a two-dimensional plane. Such profile has a top width A, FIG. 21, a bottom width B, and a height C. The profile has tapered frustoconical right and left sidewalls 302 and 304. The right and left sidewalls are projected along respective right and left conical projection lines 306 and 308 intersecting at a source point 310. A centerline 312 is extended from source point 310, bisecting A. A first arc 314 is struck, intersecting right and left endpoints 316 and 318 from a focal point at source point 310. Arc 314 has a radius S_{p1} . A second arc 320 is struck, intersecting right and left endpoints 322 and 324 of B from a focal point at source point 310. Arc 320 has a radius S_{p2} . A cone radius R_p of the profile is determined according to $R_p = \frac{A}{2}$. A pot pattern angle α_p is determined according to $\alpha = \frac{R}{S_1} 360^\circ$. Radial lines 326 and 328 are laid out from source point 310 at angle α_p subtending arcs 314 and 320. A product is determined according to $K_x \alpha_p = \beta$. A product is determined according to $K_y C = C_p$, FIG. 23. C_p is then equally spaced along centerline 312 between arcs 314 and 320. Arc 314 is then contracted radially inwardly toward source point 310 to provide a contracted arc 330 subtended by angle β . Arc 320 is extended radially outwardly away from source point 310 to provide an extended arc 332 subtended by angle β . The pattern of the sleeve is determined by the contracted and extended arcs 330 and 332 subtended by angle β , to provide right and left sides 334 and 336, FIG. 24. The fabric material is cut along the pattern shown in FIG. 24 as a template, and then formed into a frustoconical cone to provide sleeve 52 as described above. Contracted arc 330 is parallel to arc 314. Extended arc 332 is parallel to arc 320. Again, graphics and text may be applied to the fabric in the ways described above.

The methods described in FIGS. 13–20 and 21–24 are preferred over the manual method shown in FIG. 25 wherein pot 4 is rolled along fabric material 338 through one 360-degree revolution to the position shown in dashed line at 340 to provide pattern 342.

FIG. 26 shows another embodiment including a second pot or saucer 144 that has a top 146, a bottom 148, a sidewall 150 extending between top 146 and bottom 148, an upper corner 152 at the interface of top 146 and sidewall 150, and a lower corner 154 at the interface of bottom 148 and sidewall 150. Preferably, the diameter of bottom 148 of pot 144

is greater than the diameter of bottom 10 of pot 4. The height of sidewall 150 of pot 144 is less than the height of sidewall 14 of pot 4. Sleeve 2 extends around upper corner 16 of pot 4, then downwardly along sidewall 14 of pot 4, then around upper corner 152 of pot 144, and then downwardly along sidewall 150 of pot 144, then around lower corner 154 of pot 144.

- 5 Sleeve 2 holds pots 4 and 144 together, with the underside of bottom 10 of pot 4 against the topside of bottom 148 of pot 144. The diameter of top 146 of pot 144 is greater than the diameter of top 6 of pot 4.

In FIG. 27, a first pot 170 has a top 172, a bottom 174, a sidewall 176 extending between top 172 and bottom 174, an upper corner 178 at the interface of top 172 and sidewall 176, and a lower corner 180 at the interface of bottom 174 and sidewall 176. A second pot or saucer 182 is inverted and has a downwardly facing top 184, an upwardly facing bottom 186, a sidewall 188 extending between top 184 and bottom 186, an upper corner 190 at the interface of top 184 and sidewall 188, and a lower corner 192 at the interface of bottom 186 and sidewall 188. Sleeve 2 holds pots 170 and 182 together in inverted relation, with the bottom 174 of pot 170 against the bottom 186 of pot 182, and with sidewall 176 of pot 170 extending downwardly from upper corner 178 of pot 170 to lower corner 180 of pot 170, and with sidewall 188 of pot 182 extending downwardly from lower corner 192 of pot 182 to upper corner 190 of pot 182. A third pot 194 has a top 196, a bottom 198, a sidewall 200 extending between top 196 and bottom 198, an upper corner 202 at the interface of top 196 and sidewall 200, and a lower corner 204 at the interface of bottom 198 and sidewall 200. Sleeve 2 holds pots 170, 182 and 194 together, with downwardly facing top 184 of pot 182 against bottom 198 of pot 194. Sleeve 2 extends around upper corner 178 of pot 170 then downwardly along sidewall 176 of pot 170 then around upper corner 202 of pot 194 then downwardly along sidewall 200 of pot 194 then around lower corner 204 of pot 194. Bottom 174 of pot 170 and upwardly facing bottom 186 of pot 182 have aligned openings 206 and 208 therein. Pot 170 is air impermeable, unlike pot 4 in previous figures. Pot 182 and sleeve 2 are air permeable. This embodiment is desirable for applications with commercial florists where a low cost air impermeable pot 170 is used, for example plastic, to hold soil and flowers. In such case, air cannot enter pot 170 through its sidewall 176, as shown at arrow 210, and air cannot exit pot 170 through sidewall 176, as shown at arrow 212. In FIG. 27, air enters as shown at arrow 214 through air permeable sleeve 2, then flows through air

permeable pot 182 as shown at arrow 216, then flows through aligned openings 208 and 206 as shown at arrow 218 into the soil in pot 170. Air can escape as shown at arrows 220 and 222. This breathability enhances plant life while at the same time facilitating cost savings enabling the use of plastic or other air impermeable pots such as 170, rather than the more expensive clay pots such as 4. A clay or other air permeable pot is only used at pot 182. In the embodiments above described, breathability is provided through air permeable sleeve 2 and clay or other air permeable pot 4.

FIGS. 28 and 29 show embodiments wherein only the saucer 144 or 182 is covered by the sleeve 2.

10 It is recognized that various equivalents, alternatives and modifications are possible within the scope of the appended claims. To the extent that they might not be apparent from the above, the scope of additional variations falling within the scope of the present invention will become apparent from the appended claims.